

**Richard Whitley
Administrator**



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Page 1 of 2**

State Health Officer

NEVADA STATE HEALTH DIVISION NEWS RELEASE

Patients Urged to Ask Questions Prior to Surgical Procedure

Carson City – The Nevada State Health Division is encouraging patients to be proactive about impending surgical procedures by asking their health care provider about office protocols and standards prior to receiving a surgical procedure. Prompted by the recent investigation into a Southern Nevada Ambulatory Surgery Center's (ASC) medical practices and as a way to help alleviate patient fears and anxiety regarding infection control practices at their selected facility, the State Health Division offers the following suggested questions a patient may ask their service provider:

- Can you assure me that I am safe in your facility from the transmission of communicable diseases?
- How does the staff at this facility conduct sterilization of diagnostic equipment after each patient use?
- Are single or multiple dose vials used at the facility? Are label instructions followed specifically?
- Are syringes and needles disposed of after each use?
- Has your facility ever received a complaint of the spread of an infectious disease to another patient as a result of staff practices?

Patients can also request a copy of the facility's Infection Control Policies. In addition, a patient can request a copy of the most recent federal survey or complaint survey (if any) conducted at the facility by the Nevada State Health Division's Bureau of Licensure and Certification by writing to:

Nevada State Health Division
Bureau of Licensure and Certification
4220 S. Maryland Parkway, Bldg. D, Ste. 810
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119
702.468.6515

You can also contact BLC via email: BLCweb@health.nv.gov

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NEVADA STATE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

If you have questions or concerns about insurance coverage or about payment for testing related to this incident, contact the Nevada Division of Insurance at 1-888-872-3234.

Facts About Ambulatory Surgery Centers and the Bureau of Licensure and Certifications

Role

- “Ambulatory Surgical Center” or “ASC” includes any facility that operates exclusively for the purpose of providing surgical services to patients not requiring hospitalization.
- There are 50 ASCs licensed in Nevada. Approximately 30 of these facilities are located in Southern Nevada. Some of these primarily provide endoscopic procedures. Others provide more extensive surgeries, but only for patients that will not require more than 24 hours in recovery before leaving the facility.
- The Bureau of Licensure and Certification (BLC) conducts a licensure inspection of ASCs before they can accept patients. The purpose of the inspection is to determine if the facility meets construction requirements and state health care regulations. BLC may conduct Medicare certification inspections after a facility has accepted patients, or the facility may be inspected by an accrediting agency for Medicare certification. After these initial inspections, BLC conducts complaint investigations whenever there are alleged violations of regulatory requirements.
- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) contracts with BLC to conduct inspections of all health care facilities in Nevada. This contract prioritizes the inspections and has set the minimal inspection periods for ASCs at one inspection every six years.
- In 2007, BLC received a total of four ASC complaints. To date in 2008, BLC has received five ASC complaints. All complaints are prioritized and scheduled for investigation based on their priority.
- Following an investigation, an ASC is notified of any deficiencies. If the facility fails to make corrections, BLC may take action against the facility, including terminating the business’s license if the facility fails to make corrections for compliance with federal Medicare regulations.

The State Epidemiologist, Dr. Ihsan Azzam, issued a technical bulletin to all ASCs and health care providers. The bulletin can be accessed by going to:
<http://health.nv.gov/docs/hepctechnicalbulletin.pdf>

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